

In the Claims

1. A vacuum cleaner, comprising:  
a housing including a nozzle assembly and a canister  
assembly;  
a dirt container connected to said housing, said dirt container  
5 including a collection chamber and a combined handle and inlet flow  
passageway;  
an airstream conduit for conveying a vacuum airstream from  
said nozzle assembly to said inlet flow passageway; and  
a fan and motor assembly for generating said vacuum  
10 airstream and drawing dirt and debris through said airstream conduit and  
said inlet flow passageway into said collection chamber.
2. The vacuum cleaner of claim 1, wherein said dirt container is  
connected to said canister assembly.
3. The vacuum cleaner of claim 1, wherein said inlet flow  
passageway includes a delivery port in communication with said collection  
chamber.

4. The vacuum cleaner of claim 3, wherein said collection chamber is substantially cylindrical in shape and said delivery port is oriented substantially tangentially with respect to said collection chamber.

5. The vacuum cleaner of claim 1, wherein said dirt container includes a filter and a discharge outlet.

6. The vacuum cleaner of claim 5, wherein said dirt container further includes a prefilter extending at least partially across said collection chamber between said filter and a floor of said dirt container.

7. The vacuum cleaner of claim 6, wherein said prefilter includes at least one airflow passageway in a face of said prefilter between an inner edge and an outer edge thereof.

8. A dirt container for a vacuum cleaner, comprising:  
a housing including a dirt collection chamber; and  
a combined handle and inlet flow passageway.

9. The dirt container of claim 8, wherein said dirt collection chamber is substantially cylindrical in shape.

10. The dirt container of claim 9, wherein said inlet flow passageway includes a delivery port oriented substantially tangentially and in fluid communication with said dirt collection chamber.

11. The dirt container of claim 8, wherein said dirt container further includes a prefilter extending at least partially across said collection chamber.

12. The dirt container of claim 11, wherein said prefilter includes at least one airflow passageway in a face of said prefilter between an inner edge and an outer edge thereof.

13. A vacuum cleaner, comprising:  
a housing including a nozzle assembly and a canister assembly;  
a dirt container connected to said housing, said dirt container  
5 including a collection chamber holding a filter and a prefilter;  
an airstream conduit for conveying a vacuum airstream from said nozzle assembly to said dirt container; and  
a fan and motor assembly for generating said vacuum  
airstream and drawing dirt and debris through said airstream conduit into  
10 said collection chamber;  
said vacuum cleaner being characterized by at least one  
airflow passageway in a face of said prefilter between an inner edge and an

outer edge thereof.

14. A dirt container for a vacuum cleaner, comprising:
- a housing including a dirt collection chamber;
  - a filter in said dirt collection chamber;
  - a prefilter in said dirt collection chamber between said filter
- 5 and a floor of said dirt collection chamber, said prefilter including at least one airflow passageway in a face of said prefilter between an inner edge and an outer edge thereof.